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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEHLMC/MCC WASHDC

UNCLAS MAPUTO 000949

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SENSITIVE

AF/S FOR HTREGER, AF/RSA FOR MBITTRICK, DS/IP/AF,  
DS/DSS/ITA FOR ROTHSTEIN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [MZ](#)

SUBJECT: UPSURGE IN VIOLENT CRIME: POLITICAL QUAGMIRE FOR  
GUEBUZA?

Ref: MAPUTO 781

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Violent crime in metropolitan Maputo has increased significantly in recent weeks. Crime is a top domestic issue for the Guebuza government, and press coverage is increasingly critical of his administration's response to the wave. Interior Minister Jose Pacheco has publicly promised that crime will be reduced by December potentially putting his job on the line. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) In recent weeks there has been a significant increase in the level of violent crime in Maputo and outlying neighborhoods. The growing number of murders, carjackings, home break-ins, armed assaults, and armed robberies at ATMs are the focus of intense media attention. As some of the crimes have occurred in areas where Embassy employees live, RSO issued a written security notice to Mission employees and to the non-official American community recently that received widespread press coverage.

¶3. (SBU) News media has turned openly critical of the government. On July 25, the Expresso newsletter, citing unnamed government sources, unfavorably compared Guebuza's presidency to that of former president Chissano, and suggested that Guebuza's government may be in crisis. At the same time, public opinion increasingly points to crime as the most important domestic issue.

¶4. (SBU) President Guebuza has responded by meeting several times with Interior Minister Pacheco to chart police actions. Pacheco has since announced further training for police and ordered military units to jointly patrol the streets with the police as a show of force and to reassure citizens that the government is listening. He has also publicly promised to have crime under control by December. These efforts appear to have reduced the number of crime incidents the past week, but reports of violent crimes continue.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The recent crime wave is now a top domestic concern for the Guebuza administration, and the normally subdued media has been surprisingly blunt in its criticism of the President. Opposition political parties are calling for action. Minister Pacheco's public promise to end the upswing in crime by December may set the stage for his eventual dismissal. Even so, it is doubtful whether such a change would prove effective in reducing crime levels as the police remain under-equipped, poorly trained, and tainted by allegations of corruption. END COMMENT.

CHAPMAN